

HELLO! D'S BIGGEST WE ARE IKNISHING STORE

IKEA BATU KAWAN NOW OPEN

[Home \(https://www.nst.com.my\)](https://www.nst.com.my) › [Opinion \(https://www.nst.com.my/opinion\)](https://www.nst.com.my/opinion) › [Letters \(https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters\)](https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters)



5 minute read

Ban smoking during Ramadan

Smoking during Ramadan is a sin, but it is also a crime. The poor by rich tobacco companies and multinationals. - FILE PIC

By **DR MD MAHMUDUL HASAN** (/authors/dr-md-mahmudul-hasan-0) - March 11, 2019 @ 11:56pm

REMEMBER once, as I was about to enter a mosque in Penang, I saw the imam smoking hurriedly before he walked in to lead the Zohor prayer.



BACK TO TOP

At a masjid in Kuala Lumpur, as I stood in a *saf* (prayer row) to perform the solat, a smoker stood beside me.

I suspected that, like the imam in Penang, this man also had a few puffs before entering the masjid as I could detect the strong cigarette odour.

I was irritated and distracted by the smell permeating from him.

It was difficult to concentrate. I encounter this often at other masjid.

Once, I saw a man in uniform on a motorbike having a puff before riding away. Another incident was when I was at a clinic and could smell smoke from the counter employee.

Don't get me started on public toilets because some smell strongly of smoke despite no smoking signs.

I have seen fathers smoking in family cars, exposing family members to secondhand smoke.

I have seen teens smoking secretly at school compounds or toilets.

I am sure I am not alone in encountering such situations. It seems the smoking habit affects many Malaysians, from young boys, women and professionals, to religious teachers and others.

While smokers can pollute public spaces, the right of non-smokers to breathe clean air is violated.

Children's right to a healthy environment is infringed by, in most cases, their parents.

Smoking is one of the worst forms of economic exploitation of the poor by rich tobacco companies and multinationals.

Decades of promotional exercises, especially through deceptive advertisements, have neutralised the harm of smoking.

In the past, the British launched the Opium War (1839-42 and 1856-60) to stop opium smuggling by legalising the trade.

Most cigarette-producing rich countries have imposed advertising bans and legal restrictions on tobacco consumption, especially in public places.

It would be an interesting topic for research to find out if they have reduced the amount of cigarette production in those countries.

Most smokers are aware of the harmful consequences of their habit. So raising awareness through education is not enough.

What is needed is a gradual and comprehensive ban on smoking, coupled with strict enforcement.

Enforcers and security personnel should set an example by kicking the habit first.

Once they are rid of the craving for cigarettes, it will be easier to enforce the ban.

Addictive behaviours, such as smoking and alcoholism, either as a lifestyle choice or to alleviate stress, cannot be justified in Islam. Islam does not permit smoking or drinking alcohol.

In Islam, "health is a trust from God that should be protected and enhanced so as to be able to fulfil the purpose of creation" (Jamal Badawi). Therefore, Islam prohibits unhealthy practices, including smoking, that are injurious to one's health or that of others.

Ramadan is approaching. The holy month is the best time, especially for Muslims, to abandon the habit.

I hope the government will use the month to start a total ban on cigarette smoking.

Malaysia has a good reputation around the world.

If it can set such an example, others would hopefully follow this bold move.

Dr Md. Mahmudul Hasan

Department of English Language and Literature, International Islamic University Malaysia

428 reads

RELATED STORIES



(/news/nation/2018/10/420798/smoking-ban-wont-happen-overnight)

'Smoking ban won't happen overnight'

(/news/nation/2018/10/420798/smoking-ban-wont-happen-overnight)



(/news/nation/2019/01/446800/most-terengganu-smokers-eateries-complying-smoking-ban)

